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Abstract

The main topic of the thesis is time, the perception of time, and light. Based on my observations, thoughts and daily experiences in Helsinki as an “outsider”, I came up with the idea for the thesis. Time and light are very common things in our daily lives but rarely do we think about the relationship between them or their natures. This is the reason I chose them as the research topic. The purpose of my creative work part is to make an artwork to feel the existence of invisible things for the viewer, such as passing of time and light. I started working on the thesis in September 2012 and I had an exhibition of thesis artwork in the end of February 2013. This thesis also contains the outcome of the exhibition as the result of execution process.

Keywords Time, The perception of time, Light, Textile Art, Silk screen printing

Capturing the Moment

by

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Masters Thesis in Textile Art and Design
Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture
2013

0.Foreword

This book, Capturing the Moment is a book written on my thesis artwork and its research background. The main topic of my thesis is time, the perception of time, and light. Based on my observations, thoughts and daily experiences in Helsinki as an “outsider”, I came up with the idea for the thesis. Time and light are very common things in our daily lives but rarely do we think about the relationship between them or their natures. This is the reason I chose them as the research topic. The purpose of my creative work part is to make an artwork to feel the existence of invisible things for the viewer, such as passing of time and light. I started working on the thesis in September 2012 and I had an exhibition of thesis artwork in the end of February 2013. This thesis also contains the outcome of the exhibition.

This book consists of two parts: part one explores a number of different points to view the topic of time and light. The second part illustrates the work process and theories of the thesis artwork.

To express the whole context of my thesis, I start the discussion with my personal point of view and the starting point of the research. I continue by introducing some ideas from an

American contemporary artist, James Turrell, because his standpoint is very close to mine, and his opinion helped me a lot in developing my idea further. After that I summarise my research on the concept of time. The purpose of this part is to argue how a human being is imaginative and how one thing can be interpreted in many different ways.

Next, I move to the discussion about the relationship between light and time, because we can perceive the passing of time only with the changing of other elements and light is one of them. I then discuss the topic of light in depth; the sense of light in different cultures. I introduce two artists who succeeded in capturing the sense of passing of time through expression of light in different ways. The practical part follows the theoretical part, in which, I explain the concept of my artwork, how I developed the idea, what are the hidden stories in the motives, how I planned the exhibition, how I solved problems, and how I executed my working theories.

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1. Starting Point

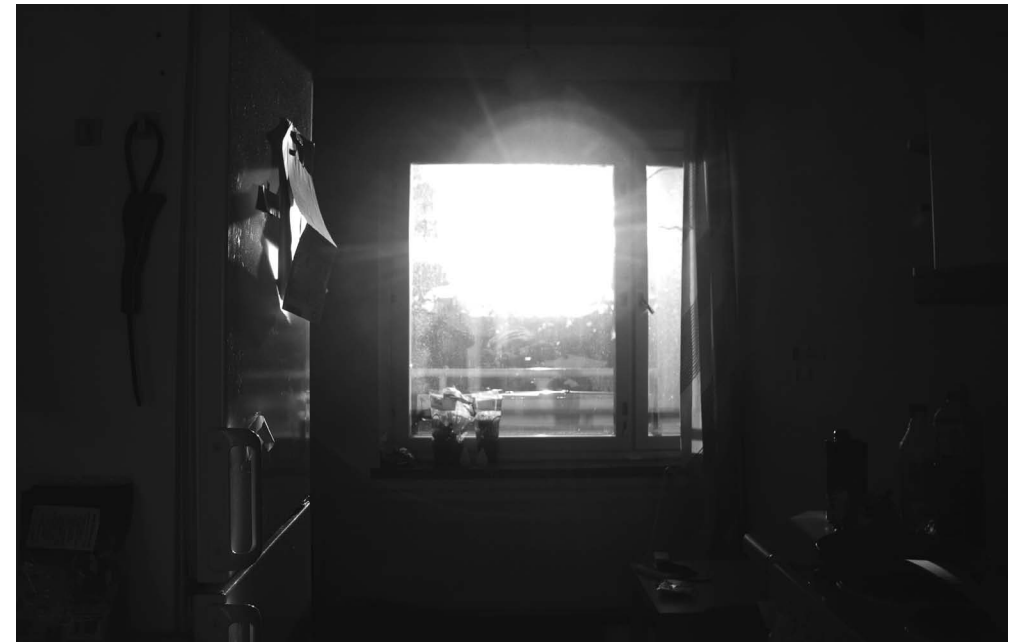
1.1 Motivation

My thesis work, *Capturing the Moment*, is an artwork based on the topic of time, the perception of time and light. This idea comes from my thoughts and experiences in Helsinki, Finland.

I feel like an “outsider” or “observer” here. I came from Tokyo to Helsinki in August 2011. Before that, I had lived in Tokyo for twenty-three years. I had not had any experiences in living in other places. Both Tokyo and Helsinki are capital cities of each country, Japan and Finland, and also located in the eastern ends of Asia and Europe. I feel sometimes, as many people think, that these two countries have similar characteristics but now I know that life in these two countries is completely different. I was amazed, and sometimes confused by the differences between the two countries. Of course, there are many cultural differences, but the thing, which was the most impressive change for me, was the changing of the seasons. I was surprised at how fast it got dark in the winter and how bright it was, even at midnight, in the summer. Even though Japan has four

seasonal changes, it is very different from the seasonal changes in Finland. Brightness does not change from one extreme to another. I noticed that these huge changes in light affect my lifestyle and behaviour a lot. I have to change the position of my desk and bed according to the season because of the brightness of the window side of my room. I can spend a longer time working at home in the winter than in the summer because I come home earlier. Maybe this finding was the starting point of my interest on time and light. This major changing that occurs through the year affects my daily activities a lot and this became a kind of intense event to me as an “outsider” or “observer”. I felt that I became more aware of the passing of time than before.

Another thing that surprised me was the fact that even the winter sunlight was glaring and strong because of the altitude of the sun is very low. It causes a dramatic effect in light and shadow. The patterns of the shade changes from moment to moment and I felt it was an interesting and beautiful phenomenon; this primitive yet easily forgetful beauty



Glaring sunlight, a view from my apartment, 2012

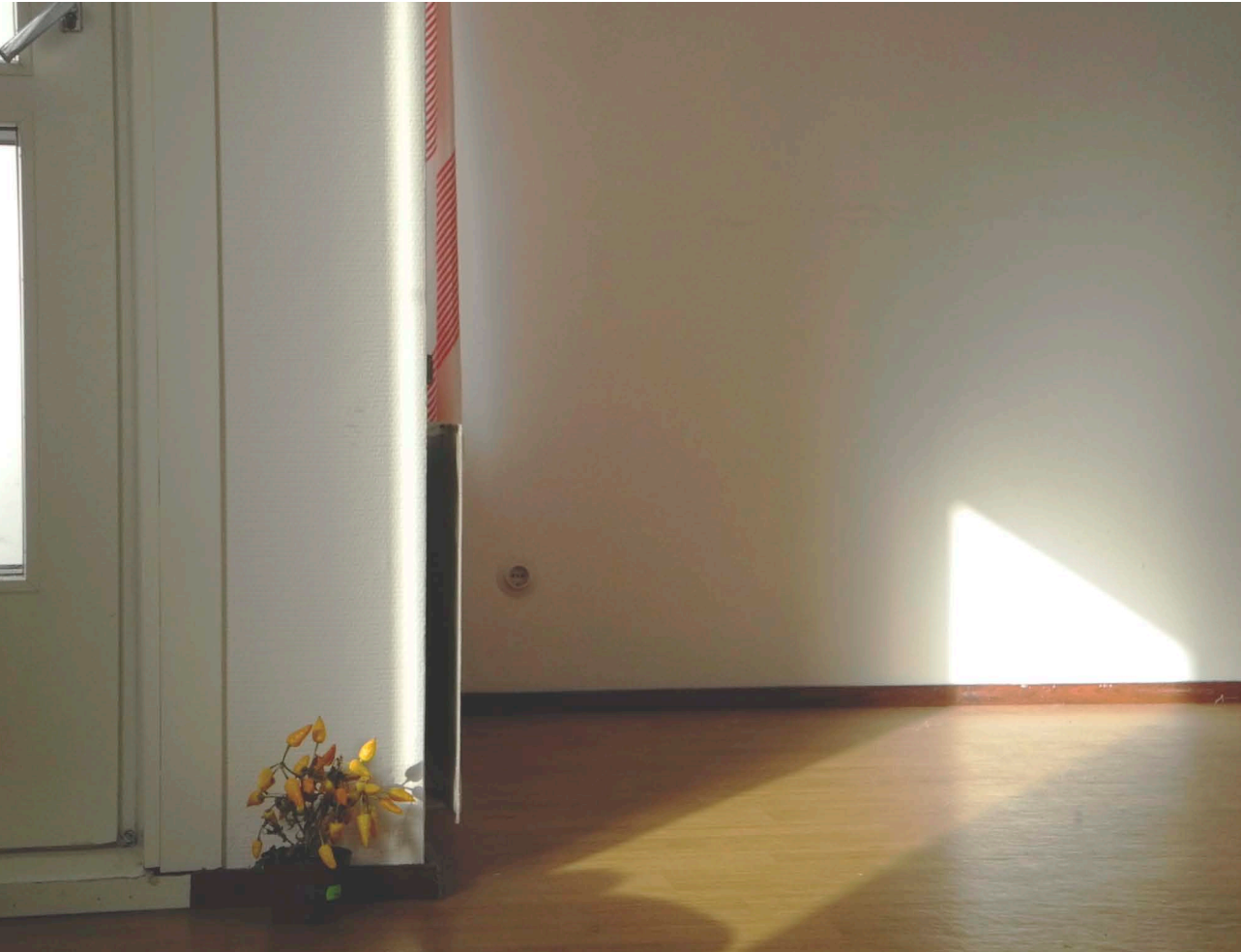
on the clean and empty architectural space in Finnish houses. I was inspired by this dramatic light and shadow created by strong and glaring sunlight in Finland. Consequently, this led to the idea for my thesis.

1.2 The Concept

The main idea of my work is to create an artwork changing in the appearance according to the amount of light. The purpose of this artwork is to feel the existence of invisible things, such as passing of time and light. I wanted to provide an opportunity to sense the passing of time for the viewer through this artwork. I named my work, “*Capturing the Moment*”.

1.3 Objective of thesis

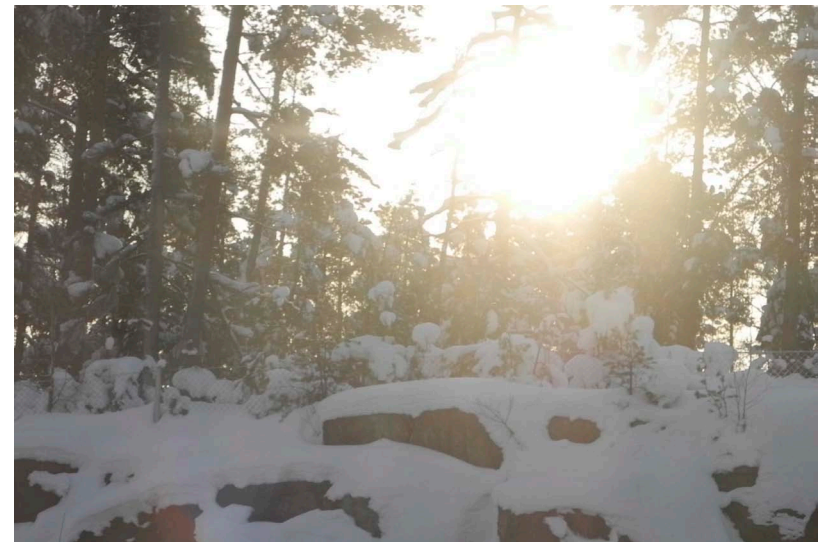
The objective of this thesis is to rethink the things we take for granted in our daily lives and try to see the things from several different angles by the method of research. In that point, my topics of interest, the time and the light are suitable themes. These things are really close to our daily lives, yet mysterious topics and they are difficult to grasp exactly for what they really are. I think it is meaningful to try to get a new perspective and mindset to something we take for granted because it is a good opportunity to maintain a fresh mind as a creative artist and designer.



Light and shade in my room, 2011



Dusk from my apartment, 2012



Glaring sun in winter, Vantaa, 2012

2. James Turrell

James Turrell (1943-) is an American artist who was born in Los Angeles. He creates a lot of artworks concerned with light and space. He studied psychology of perception at Pomona College in Los Angeles in the 1960s. He has created a lot of works “*using light as a material to influence or affect the medium of perception*”¹. He thinks perception is a mysterious gift for the human because we usually possess it unconsciously. Many of his installation works are to make people re-realize the existence of light. Sometimes he uses some mechanical structure to complete his installation work, but his work is not classified as technology art nor media art because the objective of his work is to appeal to people’s perception and he gets the maximum effect with using still mechanical but not less sophisticated technology.²

Many of his works require the viewer to spend a certain amount of time to appreciate it. For example, “*Meeting*”³ is a rectangular opening in the ceiling of a large room. (fig.1) People can observe the sky through the opening at dusk. The shape of the room and opening are carefully calculated so that

the artificial lights produce an orange glow on the white walls of the room to make complementary colours as blue colour of the sky. Thus permitting the viewer to appreciate the intensity of colour of the sky.⁴

“There’s this four-square seating that’s inside, seating toward each other, having a space that created some silence, allowing something to develop slowly over time, particularly at sunset. Also, this Meeting has to do with the meeting of space that you’re in with the meeting of the space of the sky.” (James Turrell, PBS interview)

“*Backside of the Moon*” is another example on Turrell’s installation works. (fig.2) This work is exhibited as a permanent work at Naoshima Islands in Japan. To experience this installation artwork, the viewer needs to walk into a completely dark room and sit down on a bench according to the lead of usher.⁵ After a 10-minute wait, the viewer notices that a screen of light gradually appears in front of him/her. This artwork uses the mechanism of so-called dark adaptation. Dark adaptation is a phenomenon when our eyes become able

to recognize things in the dark getting used to darkness. Turrell’s screen emits really low light and only after the dark adaptation has happened, the viewer sees the screen.

For Turrell’s work, it is an essential process that the viewer spends this certain amount of time in the room prior to the appearance of the screen and it can be considered as a ceremonious moment. His work is not just a beautiful light but he requires the viewer to perceive positively. His fundamental claims and aims are overlap with my original interests and findings. Also, his comments in the interview provided me with a lot of hints when forming my research.

Notes

- 1 - James Turrell, 2011. Interview Magazine interviewed by Michael Govan [Accessed January 2013]
- 2 - Anonymous, 2013. James Turrell: Wikipedia [Accessed January 2013]
- 3 - A permanent work made by James Turrell for MoMA PS1; a contemporary art museum in New York.
- 4 - MoMA PS1 website [Accessed January 2013]
- 5 - Amy Chavez, 2008. Land of the Great Pumpkin [Accessed January 2013]

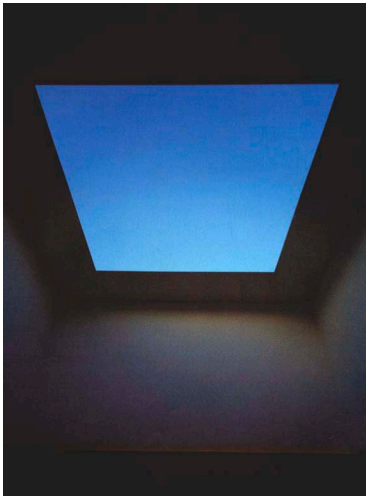


fig.1 Meeting, James Turrell

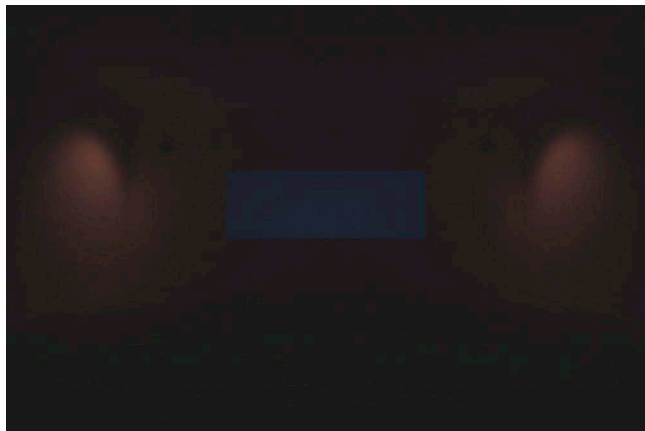


fig.2 Backside of the moon, James Turrell

3.Time and Human

*“We live within this reality we create, and we’re quite unaware of how we create the reality.”
(James Turrell, Interview Magazine)*

Perspective is our projection of consciousness. I am interested in how people understand the concept of time and how it has developed because it animates the people’s view of the world and what reality is for them. In this chapter, I introduce several different points of view on time, the history of time and the findings on the perception of time based on the scientific research in several different areas. The main point of this chapter is to argue that time itself does not have any specific nature but the human being keeps trying to find a proper interpretation for it in their own “realities”. I do not have any personal opinion about the credibility of each theory but I admire the human’s rich creativity and imagination.

3.1 Time Recognition and Human’s View of the World

Nowadays we live in a world, in which time is measured by scientific time clock. However, humans did not have any accurate clock

that could keep accurate time continually for years on end until a successful pendulum clock was invented by a Dutch scientist Christian Huygens in the middle of 17th century.⁶ Before that people lived in another reality. I would like to say that they lived in more imagination-based reality compared to our view of time in the modern society. I am fascinated by the emotional and chaotic parts in the origin of the human’s recognition of time.

“In man’s case, awareness of the distinction between past, present and future must have been the result of conscious reflection on the human situation. The mental and emotional tension resulting from man’s discovery that every living creature is born and dies, including himself, must have led him intuitively to seek some escape from the relentless flux of time.” (GJ Whitrow, What is Time?)

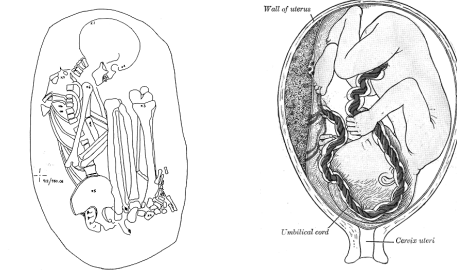
One of the important differences between man and all other creatures is the understanding of the concept of time. Animals live in continual present but humans always exist

in between past and future. The understanding of concept of time determines differences between animals and humans. However, it doesn't mean that we always have a clear interpretation of time. We have a long history where several different concepts of time competed with each other and the concepts supported by the majority became the standard at the time. It is possible to say that the essence of time is an illusion because how you understand the concept of time forms the foundation of your perspective of the world.

The oldest concept of time might be the cyclical view of time. GJ Whitrow (1972)⁷ claims that there is evidence that ritual burial was already an established custom in 35,000 BC and it may be an indication of the origins of the cyclic conception of time. The dead found from that period were usually buried in a crouched posture; exactly the same posture of foetus in the womb of the mother, and it means that the dead were placed in the womb of Mother Earth for future rebirth. Whitrow mentions this explanation of our remote ancestor's burial custom is an open question, but still is an interesting hypothesis.

To understand the cyclical view of time, the intuitive understanding of feeling the importance of cyclical phenomena in nature seems to be a key factor. This understanding of the sense of rhythm was essential for the human to survive in the ancient era.

Figure 12: Detail of the 17th-century anatomical engraving showing a fetus in the womb, illustrating the concept of time as a cycle.



Nowadays seasonal natural phenomena would not be a threat in most cases in the highly developed society. However, we still remember and know that the nature sometimes bares her fangs to the human and we cannot resist it. Thus, natural disasters actually help the human to develop the sense of time. Again, according to Whitrow, the Egyptians who lived near the Nile devised a calendar, which consists of twelve months, each thirty days, with five additional days at the end of the year. They based their calendar to the three cycles of the Nile at Cairo. However, Whitrow continues, despite the Egyptian example, in most cases calendars are intended to be associated with religion because of the importance of the need to fix celebration dates. Actually, in accordance with this law, linear view of time has born.

When the topic comes to relationship between religion and the time recognition, I cannot go forward without mentioning Christianity because according to GJ Whitrow, it is the origin of linear view of

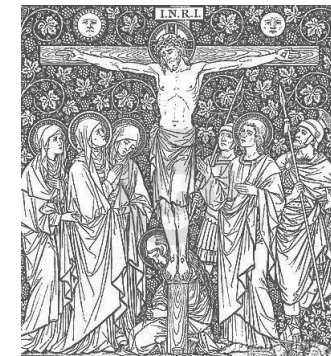
time and our modern concept of time is rather linear than cyclical. In the teachings of Christ, Crucifixion was regarded as an event that never subjected to repeat in chronicle. In that sense, time must be inevitably linear and not cyclic in the way of thinking unlike many other ancient cultures and cosmological ideas. After that, the two major views of time; linear and cyclical were conflicting each other throughout the whole medieval period.

"Scientists and scholars, influenced by astronomy and astrology, tended to emphasize the cyclic concept. The linear concept was fostered by the mercantile class and the rise of money economy. For as long as power was concentrated in the ownership of land, time was felt to be plentiful and was associated with the unchanging cycle of the soil. But with the circulation of money the emphasis was on mobility. The tempo of life was increased, and time was now regarded as something valuable that was felt to be slipping away continually." (GJ Whitrow, *What is Time?*)

Whitrow says that clear differences can be seen in the expression of the concept of time in classical art and typical Renaissance images of time. In classical art, it is interpreted as "fleeting opportunity (*Kairos*)" or "creative eter-

nity (*Aion*)". In contrast, the image of time in Renaissance was the destroyer, equipped with sandglass, scythe or sickle. I really like this kind of viewpoint, it is imaginative and inspiring. I cannot help wondering which image modern people have about time. Either negative things such as irritate and dull or positive and symbol of fruitful modern life.

Back to the original topic, as I mentioned in the beginning, until the successful pendulum



clock was invented in the middle of the 17th century, humans did not have a way to know or measure accurate time. Therefore, Whitrow makes a guess that the people's time reckoning was essentially discontinuous. Even the operation of sundials, sand-reckoners and water

clocks were more or less irregular. Newton persisted in the cyclical view of time and he was convinced that the world was coming to an end. Whitrow, introducing one example, to show how people in the ancient time understood and calculated time: Homer⁸ makes one of the Priam's sons say to Achilles in his book "Twenty-first Book of the Iliad", "This is the twelfth Dawn since I came to Ilion."

3.2 Elastic Time

As we discuss huge scale things about time, I would now like to return to a more personal topic. Do you have any experiences that feel as if the time slows down or speeds up? I have a lot of these kinds of experiences, I feel as if time is warped. In this part, I would like to mention how our perception of time is an elastic and ambiguous measurement system.

There are some elements that directly affect our perception of time and emotion is one of them. Maybe this is easy to imagine, basically, we tend to feel that the passing of time is slower when we feel bored and quicker when we are enjoying something or concentrate on something. However, according to Claudia Hammond (2012), the most powerful emotion to skew our perception of time is fear. When we are genuinely frightened, one minute can feel like fifteen. So, usually when we experience a life-threatening incident, our brain creates much more memories than usual. All the events every second are brand new information for our brain and it makes us feel as if it takes a longer time than it really does. According to the research of Elizabeth F. Loftus and her colleagues⁹ in 1987, when people saw a video of a bank robbery lasting exactly 30 seconds, two days later they tended to guess that the duration of the video was five times longer than it really was. The more disturbing the version of the video they

were shown, the greater their overestimation.

Claudia Hammond found out that it has been established that people who suffer from depression feel that the time passes much slower compared to the sentiment of the normal people. As similar kind of feeling of depression, one researcher carried out an experiment on the relationship between rejection and sense of time. Jean M. Twenge¹⁰ conducted this kind of an experiment in 2003. He divided people into two groups and told one group they were rejected by the other group. Then researchers asked both groups to estimate 40 seconds without any measurement. The average of the normal group was 42.5 seconds, while the average of rejected group was 63.6 seconds. Negative feelings like rejection makes their perception of time stretch to one and a half times longer. According to this result, it might be possible to say that depression equals to disorder of time perception. Our time perception is such an ambiguous sensor and it has elasticity.

Usually, we are able to know the passing of time from the information of environmental changes such as the scenery and sounds. On the other hand, it is also true that the surroundings can also become a trigger to confuse our sense of time. So, what will happen to our sense of time if we have no clue to judge time? Without any signals of pass-

ing of time, how will our body measure the timing and will it work correctly or will it be stretched? There is an experiment to answer these questions. This experiment was conducted by a French underground explorer, an adventurer and scientist, Michel Siffre¹¹ in 1962. He spent two months in a cave in the French Alps in totally isolated environment. He lived in a subterranean glacier underground with no clocks or daylight to mark time. When I read about this experiment for first time, I thought that his perception of time might slow down compared to real clock because there was no entertainment and he had to endure loneliness and boredom that lasted 1,500 hours. In fact, contrary to my expectations, he was astonished when his team members reached the glacier to fetch him after exactly two months. At that time, he thought he still had 25 days to go. Despite him being absolutely lonely and bored, his time perception was about two times expanded.¹² What we can learn from this experiment is that we adjust our internal sense of time by the changing of surroundings.

3.3 Time Perception and Body Size

In the end of this chapter, I would like to introduce one interesting hypothesis based on the research from the field of Zoology. This argument was introduced to Japanese community in general by a book written by a Japanese biologist Tatsuo Motokawa (1993). He introduced an unfamiliar concept in general named allometry by means of publishing a book which written in easy expression. A summary of his ideas below.

Have you ever felt that the smaller creatures behave quicker than the bigger one? Since the ancient times, many people have been trying to figure out the relationship between the body size and time. For example, some people measured the rate of each mammal's heartbeat and calculate the proportion to their weight. As a result, they found a formula for mammals; time is proportional to the weight raised to the one-fourth. This means the weight becomes sixteen times heavier and the time perception becomes two times slower.

I do not consider this formula to be entirely accurate in terms of it covering all mammals in the world, however, this is quite an interesting way of thinking. Tatsuo continues his discussion; the interval of the heartbeat is the same as the time intervals of repetitive phenomena happening inside of our body.

Each time our hearts beat, fresh blood is sent out to our bodies through vessels. The time it takes for the blood to return to the heart after having gone through the whole body is longer if you have a large body and thus smaller ones have a faster blood circulation. If we think this way, we can understand that each creature has her own time. Mice have the time of the mouse and elephants have the time of the elephant. If this is true, my body size is quite small, smaller than the average. So, if you are a tall person, perhaps my time perception is slightly faster than yours.

Based on the previous contents, Tatsuo gives appealing consideration about the perception of time. He claims that someone calculated time according to this formula of time and weight. If all the phenomena related to time are proportional to weight raised to the one-fourth, we can calculate the numbers without the weight to make a division with two numbers from anything related to time. For example, when we divide the numbers of life span by the time intervals of our heartbeat: the hearts of all the mammals beat about two billion times in their life. If we divide the numbers of life span by the numbers of breathing, most of the mammals breathe five hundred millions times in their life. If we measure the life span of mouse and elephant by physical time, elephants can live much longer than mouse. However, if we think

their own heartbeat as a clock to measure the time, both elephants and mice live and die in totally same amount of time. To sum up his hypothesis, the small creature has a faster perception of time compared to big ones. In that sense, perhaps their perception of life is not so different even in mouse and elephant.

In this chapter, I explored several different kinds of “realities” mentioned by James Turrell in his interview. First, I introduced the origin of the history of time through the relationship between time and the human’s faith and values at that time. Then, I discussed the ambiguity of human’s perception of time based on the research examples from the field of psychology. In the end, I broadened the discussion from the relationship between time and human to mammals with using the hypothesis from the field of zoology. Like I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I believe time itself does not have any specific nature. However, we can define it by observing the relationship between time and some other things. In following chapter, I would like to discuss the relationship between time and light by introducing my own experiences and some examples from scientific research.



Picture from thesis exhibition, "Capturing the Moment" 2013

Notes

- 6 - GJ Whitrow, 1972. What is Time? p21
- 7 - A British mathematician, cosmologist and science historian.
- 8 - A famous poet who lived in ancient Greek.
- 9 - Claudia Hammond, 2012. Time Warped p29
- 10 - Claudia Hammond, 2012. Time Warped p31
- 11 - Claudia Hammond, 2012. Time Warped p90
- 12 - Claudia Hammond, 2012. Time Warped p93



Window in my room, 2012

4.Light and Time

“Many people are unaware about light or never think about it. However, it doesn’t mean we don’t affected by light.” (James Turrell, Interview Magazine)

4.1 My room

I share a one-bedroom apartment with my friend. Since my friend chose to live in the bedroom, the room I live in is the living room; more precisely, I live in the corner of the huge living room. Our apartment is on the fourth floor and our house is close to the forest. I like my room, because there is no partition. Entrance space and kitchen are connected through my living space. My room also has two huge windows. My bed and desk are arranged next to the window. I can see the sunset and different gradations of the coloured sky from the window every day. The sunlight sometimes makes interesting shapes of light and shadow inside of the room. It appears on the empty wall painted white and soon it goes away.

Also, the entrance of my apartment is an interesting place to observe the play of light and shade. Our apartment has a spiral stair-

case in the centre of the building and the staircase is always dark because there are no windows. However, the front door is made of transparent glass plate and sometimes sunlight creeps into the inner part of the staircase. Compared to the light and shade, which appear in the room, the one appearing on the entrance is closer to the Japanese light and shade because the colour of darkness is darker and deeper. I love to observe the gradient tones appearing on the empty wall of the corridor.

In either case, it is important that I can observe the light and shade because of the combination of sunlight from low altitude and empty space. This empty space reminds me of the keywords such as clean, simple, minimal and silent and those keywords are strongly connected to my subjective image of Finland.

Another thing, the huge change that happens in my room according to the affect of sunlight, is seasonal changing of the position of my desk and bed(fig.3a,b). The window in my room is facing southwest. So, in the morning, left side of the window is brighter than

right side because the left side of the window is closer to the true east when I standing towards the window. In the evening, I can see the sunset directly from the right side of the window. Usually I work at my desk from around seven o'clock until midnight and sleep in the bed until eight o'clock in the morning. In the summer, to avoid the direct sunlight hitting my eyes at sunset, I move my desk to the left side of the window so I am not facing the right side of the window. In the winter, to get the sunlight in the morning to wake up more easily, I move my bed to the left side of the window. To bring the desk to right side in the winter is also good for me, because when I draw something with my right hand, I do not get the shadow of my hand on the paper when working during the day.



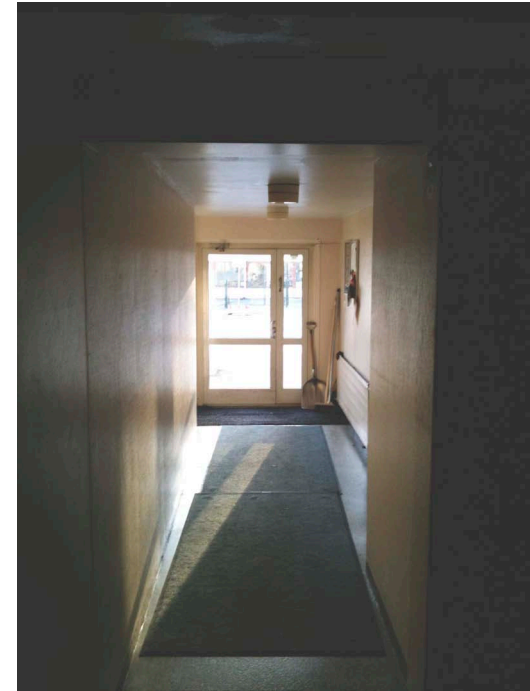
fig.3-a My room in Summer, 2012



fig.3-b My room in Winter, 2012



Picturaâe from my room, 2012



Entrance of my apartment, 2012



Basement of my apartment and shadow, 2012

4.2 Brightness as a measure of time

There is a word: photoperiodism. Photoperiodism is a biological phenomenon caused by the influence of the length of day and night. This word was initially introduced by W. W. Garner and H. A. Allard in 1920 in the United States.¹³ They noticed that the length of the daylight (In fact, it was the length of darkness) controlling the time of flowering by means of observing sown seeds of soybean in several different timings. Regardless of the difference of growth period, flowers bloomed at the same time and they call this phenomenon Photoperiodic Response.¹⁴

GJ Whitrow defines this phenomenon: photoperiodism can be seen in a lot of species not only in plants but also in animals. Germination of seeds, arousal of animals from hibernation, migration of birds and the seasons for animal breeding, all of them happen due to photoperiodism. This changing caused by the interval of day and night is more remarkable in the middle and high latitude places because the seasonal changing occurs regularly in this area of the surface of Earth. A century has not passed after this word, photoperiodism was invented, but the fact that lots of plants and animal activities are synchronised to the seasonal changes is known from long, long time ago. Our ancestors took advantage of using their natures as wisdom. For example, in medieval Holland,

bird hunters prepared decoy birds in the autumn, which showed the behaviour of the breeding season by controlling their biological clock with artificial light. Japanese were raising Nightingale with artificial light to enjoy their humming in the winter.¹⁵

As I previously mentioned according to the explanation of Whitrow, this phenomenon called photoperiodism is more likely to be happening according to the length of darkness than daylight. It means our biological clock sensor becomes most sensitive just after the brightness turns into darkness. This is proven by the experiment where ferrets reach the state of the breeding season in both cases they are subjected to eighteen hours light daily continuous or six hours daily total of two hours are given as an interruption of the initial 12 hours of dark period. These findings are clearly indicative that living organisms possess internal biological clocks and they are adjusted and maintained by the rhythm of day and night.¹⁶

So in this chapter, I discussed the relationship between time and sunlight from micro and macro points of view. My observations and findings from my room are quite personal, photoperiodism again is objective evidence of relationship between light and time. My observation looks more personal and subjective oriented time perception. However,

it is also possible to say that we know that phenomenon as experience at some point in the past. For example, I already knew the fact that some flowers are blooming only in daytime and petals close for the night through past experiences. Like this, both time and lights are primitive and basic elements existing in our lives and they are deeply related to each other. In the following chapter, I will focus on the topic of light.

Notes

13 - GJ Whitrow, 1972. What is Time? p53

14 - Anonymous, 2013. Photoperiodism: Wikipedia [Accessed January 2013]

15 - GJ Whitrow, 1972. What is Time? p56

16 - GJ Whitrow, 1972. What is Time? p54



Dusk in Tokyo, Japan, 2013

5.Light

*“Light in Japan is soft, because of the cloud or pollution. In either case, it is a gentle light.”
(James Turrell, *A Consciousness that Touches the Light*)¹⁷*

This is how James Turrell sees Japanese light. Now, after staying in Helsinki for a year and a half year, I understand his feeling. I do not know what makes the impression of light in Japan soft but I agree with his comment. Nuance of light and shade in Japan consists of ephemeral gradients between light and dark. I am not sure that if the humidity affects appearance but anyway it is calm. (fig.12) Compared to that, impression of sunlight in Finland is more clear and transparent. Japan is a country located in the mid-latitude area on the earth and the changing of four seasons is well balanced. The altitude of the sun is changing from low to high according to the seasonal changing but basically the sun passes overhead in daytime and sunlight hits our eyes from low latitude only for a while at sunset. So I feel like the winter sunlight in Finland is like the Japanese sunset cut at a certain proportion and stretched to the length of daytime. It brings me a strange

feeling but at the same time it is dramatic and poetic. Especially in Tokyo, landscape of the city is made from tall buildings and apartment buildings. They often block the view and it is rare that we see the glaring and strong sunlight in Tokyo. Furthermore, though this is my personal opinion, spatial hollow in Finland makes good combination with glaring sunlight and it produces beauty, which contains Scandinavian aesthetic. This is how I see the light in Helsinki and Tokyo. I also feel that Finnish people are good at dealing with vivid and strong colour like Japanese are good at working with delicate and subtle tones.

5.1 Sense of Light and Colours

There is a well-known essay for Japanese titled *"In Praise of Shadows"*. The book is written by a Japanese essayist and novelist, Junichiro Tanizaki. In his book, he discusses the differences between the sense of light in Japan and Western culture. The book is an essay and he mainly just describes his subjective thoughts according to the theme, so there is no objective data to back up his argument. However, his point of view is very unique and interesting. In particular, I like the part where Junichiro expresses the colour preferred in Europe with using the phrase the colours *"as if the rays of the sun are overlapped"*¹⁸. I think this expression is quite appropriate for the sense of colour in Finland. It reminds me the typical colouring of Marimekko fabrics such as vivid blue and red colours. (fig.4) For me, those colours have clear and transparent impression, and they seem most beautiful under the natural sunlight. It is exactly the colours *"as if the rays of the sun are overlapped"*.

On the other hand, Junichiro claims that Japanese prefer *"the colours compounded of darkness"* and I agree with his opinion in two different ways. There are lots of dark colours and their gradient tones when we see the Japanese traditional colour scheme. These subtle colours were classified according to the season in detail and Japanese ancestors enjoyed the transition of seasons by using the suitable colours in the right time according to the rules of seasonal classification. It seems the Japanese are keener on the light and shade of the colours themselves than on the effect of the light. When you have a look at any kind of traditional Japanese painting, there is no expression of shadows. Instead all the elements are represented by thin outlines and different tones of colours fill the space created by the outlines carefully. (fig.5) In traditional Japanese painting, paints are made by mixing colour pigments and gelatinous glue together. The darkness of the tones is adjustable to how much pigment we add to the glue, i.e. if you

have dark blue pigments, you can make several different tones of blue paints with same pigments. So, in that sense, I think the expression of Junichiro, *"the colours compounded of darkness"* is physically correct.

Another interpretation of Junichiro's claim is the way the Japanese use vivid or gorgeous colours. These kinds of colours are often used in paintings for a special or festive occasion. For example, when I think about the vivid red colour in Japan, the colour of the paper lanterns for the summer festival comes to mind first of all. The sight of the red light of lanterns floating in the darkness of the night brings us the real feeling of summer in Japan. (fig.6) There is another example, which shows the combination of special colour to a special occasion. When we have a look at Japanese classical art or Buddhist art, we can see that they prefer to use the colour of gold. For example, an image of Buddha often has a golden body. Also paintings on sliding doors

and folding screens often have a background made of a sheet of gold foil. These golden colours are not for showing off but for the reflection effect of light. In ancient Japan, inside of the house was occupied by darkness. Of course, they used some kind of lamps and a fireplace to get a certain amount of brightness but it was still dark enough. Under such conditions, when the gold colour reflected the light, it stood out mysteriously. Because of this darkness, we felt the value of light and regarded it as a symbol of the holy and mysterious existence.

To give a brief summary of my views; with the brightness, Japanese seem to be keener on the light and shade of the colours themselves more than on the effect of the light. To enjoy the subtle gradients of colour, Japanese even put the vivid colours into the darkness.

Notes

17 - This phrase is translated by me from Japanese

18 - This phrase is translated by me from Japanese



fig.4 Picture from Marimekko fashion show, 2012



fig.5 Japanese painting by Shoen Uemura



fig.6 Picture from Japanese Summer festival

5.2 Sense of Light and Art

To discuss this matter in depth, I picked out two painters who had succeeded in capturing the impression of light and expressing the feeling of the passing of time in the field of art. The first one is Claude Monet, and the second is Vilhelm Hammershøi. The objective of this chapter is to get a deeper understanding, by researching the background and works in detail, of how the two artists succeeded in capturing the impression of the passing of time through the expression of light in their works.

Case Study 1: Water Lilies

Claude Monet (1840-1926) is known as one of the most famous impressionist painters in the 19th century. Impressionism is an art movement that originated with a group of Parisian artist at the time. Typical of impressionist painting is to prioritize the expression of the impression of object to the faithful painting to the real proportion and colours and so on. This movement, impressionism, became a huge movement and it affected other fields of art, such as music and literature as well.¹⁹

On Monet's well-known paintings of water lilies in his garden at Giverny: originally he painted the same theme repeatedly, as he painted the haystacks and River Seine, but he drew more than 250 paintings of water lilies

between 1883 and 1926, since he settled in Giverny until the year of his death. It is said that one of the reasons he kept painting water lilies was financial and it maybe true, but he kept challenging new methods and expressions to capture the changing aesthetic of nature and their impression.²⁰

The things most interesting to see in his paintings of water lilies are the expressions of reflection of the water. Actually, the water lilies themselves, which also give the title to his paintings "*Water Lilies*", are not thematically most important. It is a hint given by the painter to the viewer to recognize that there is a surface of water and the reflected landscapes are drawn on canvas. As if to indicate that, having a look at his early works of paintings of water lilies, the real part of a tree and opposite side of the shore, are often painted on the canvas, as well. (fig.7) Otherwise Monet paints the landscape from a distant visual point, after having decided the composition so that to paint the water lilies by using the method of perspective, because it is easier to understand when a flat surface is painted on the canvas. Conversely, to have a look his later water lilies, it is obvious that he is more concentrated on the expression of the water and its reflection. (fig.8) There are no other motives but water lilies and the surface of the pond. Also the brush stroke becomes rougher compared to the earlier ones.



Picture from Monet's garden

The border of the water and the water lilies are vague and blurred. Composition is bolder than that from early years as if painted from a view overlooking the pond.

It is known that Monet suffered from cataract in his later life and he lost most of his eyesight. However, his interests and what he wanted to express with the paintings of water lilies seem to be obviously consistent. It is said that Monet lined up easels in a row so that he could catch the changes in the light. It also said that he sometimes threw tantrums because a change in the weather forced him to abandon a canvas for a time.²¹ As can

be seen from those facts that Monet made great efforts to capture the ephemera and ever changing nature through the reflecting sky, trees and the colour of sunlight, which appears on the surface of the pond in his garden.

Notes

19 - Anonymous, 2013. Impressionism: Wikipedia [Accessed January 2013]

20 - Polly Cone, Adele Westbrook ed., 1981. Monet's Year at the Giverny

21 - Polly Cone, Adele Westbrook ed., 1981. Monet's Year at the Giverny

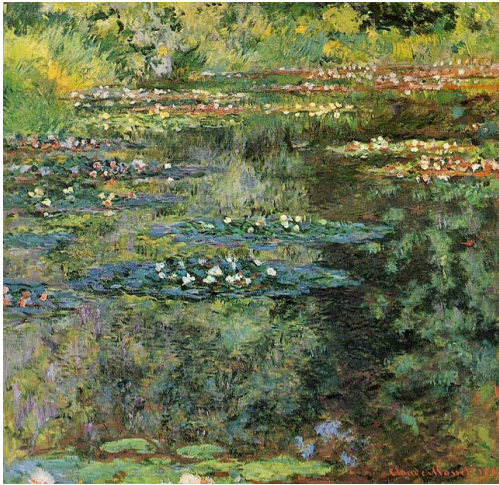


fig.7 Early Water Lilies

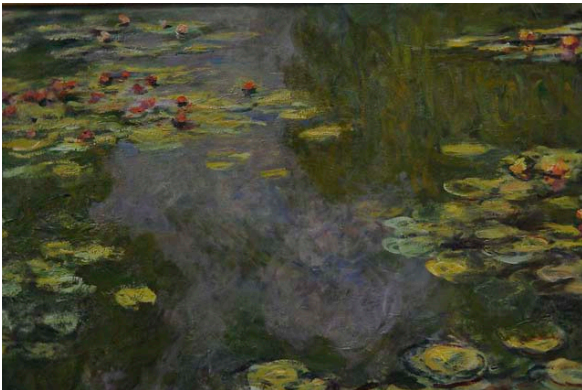


fig.8 Late Water Lilies

Case Study 2: Empty Room

Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916) is a Danish painter who was active in the late 19th century. His work is known as a representation of Scandinavian Symbolism. Many of his works are affected by Dutch interior paintings from the 17th century by painters like Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch.²² However, the impression on Hammershøi's paintings makes a clear distinction when compared to the Dutch interior painters. Against Dutch paintings represents a familiar feeling of everyday life, many props are deleted or missing in the Hammershøi's paintings and it brings wired feeling. He often paints the inside of his own room but there is no lived-in feeling. Instead, there is a certain kind of stillness and a quiet passing of time present in his painting.

When you look at Hammershøi's "*Woman Reading in Sunlight, Strandgade 30*", there is a woman sitting in a chair near a window reading a book. (fig.9) This picture was painted in his room with a window on the courtyard and the woman in the picture is his mother. It is said that he is making a reference to Peter Jansens Elinga's (1623-1682) "*Woman Reading*" (fig.10), and the similarity between these two paintings is obvious but Hammershøi deleted a lot of elements and props from his painting and succeeded in making a clear distinction between the two paintings.²³ For

example, Hammershøi does not paint any excessive things except a painting on the wall, no shoes on the floor or other interior decorations that can be seen in Elinga's painting. Hammershøi also trims the composition as much as possible and there is only the opposite wall and the floor. As there is nothing beside wall on his painting, expression of spatial distance is quite vague for the viewer. Details are also vague and blurred. The legs of the chair are merged with the dress of the woman and decorative patterns on the wall are disappearing. There is no expression of wrinkles of curtains and the projected shadow of the frames of the window is distorted. The view from the window is misty and also the painting on the wall does not have details. Hammershøi's painting is very abstract at a glance but some small details such as the sunlight on the floor and slightly opened door narrowly bring us the feeling of the passing of time. These elements somehow make contrast and this painting has a mysterious but quiet and poetic impression.

Hammershøi often paints the same place of the room in different painting repeatedly. Also, the same props appear in different paintings many times. As a result, despite each of his painting has an impression which misses a lively feeling of daily life because of the minimized elements and vague details, a quiet feeling of passing of time recalled

in our minds when we see the paintings of Hammershøi. The two painters had their similarities but most distinctive difference is that Hammershøj did not try to capture the momentary impressions of changing nature in his paintings the way Monet did, but to create a feeling of quiet passing of time.

Notes

22 - Naoki Saito, Felix Krämer ed., 2008. Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence

23 - Naoki Saito, Felix Krämer ed., 2008. Vilhelm Hammershøi: The Poetry of Silence



Hammershøi's paintings with punch bowl



fig.9 Woman Reading in Sunlight, Strandgarde 30, Vilhelm Hammershøi

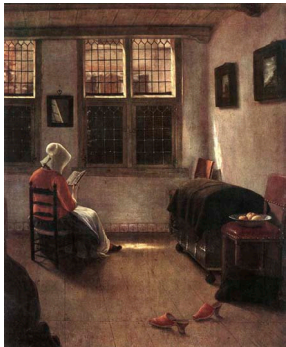
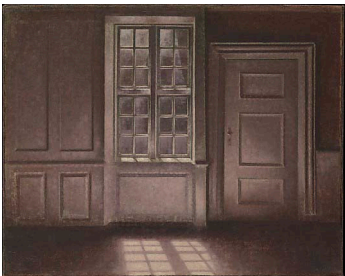


fig.10 Women Reading, Peter Jansens Elinga



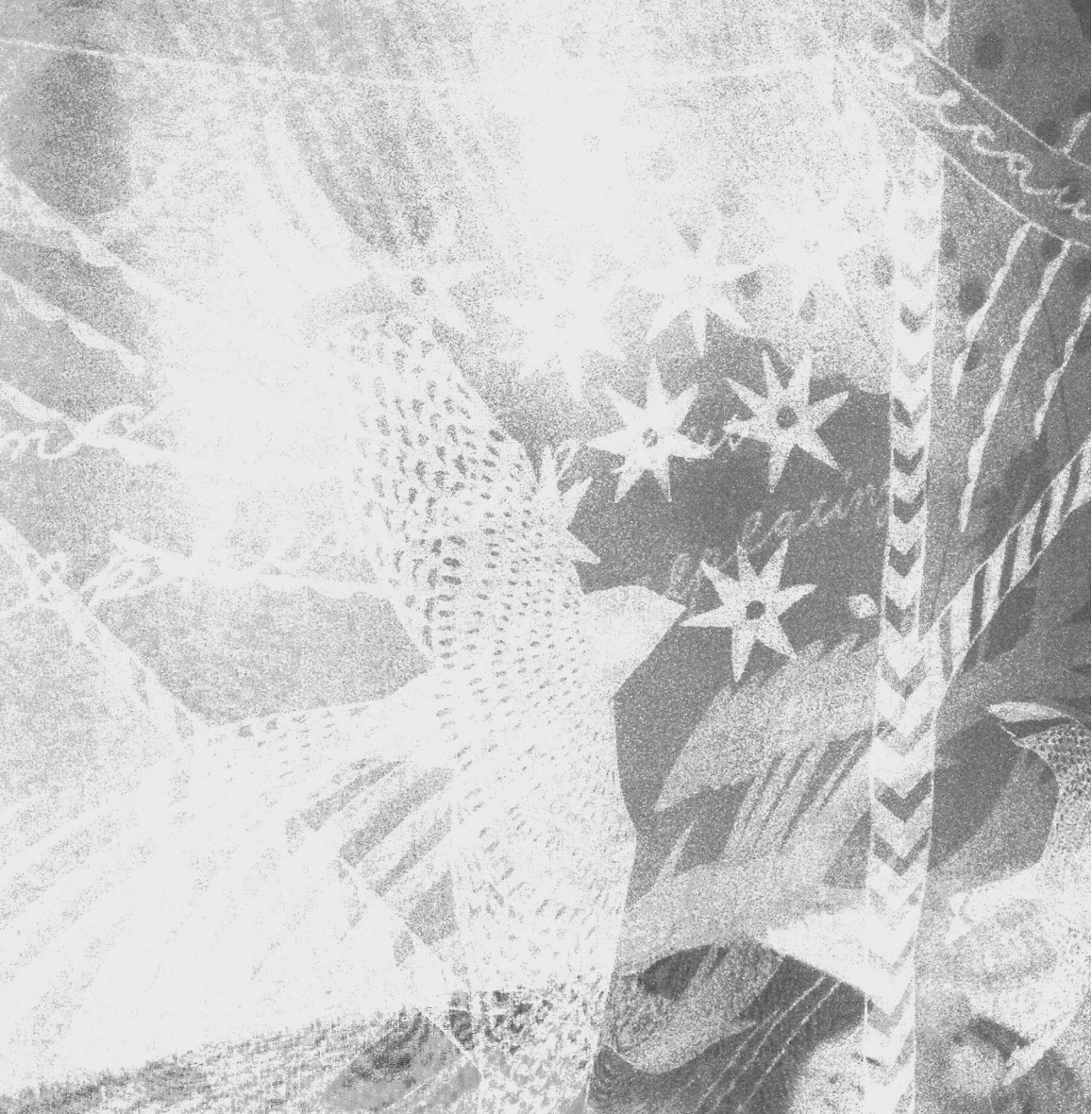
fig.11 Hammershøi's paintngs of the same room in different time



6.Capturing the Moment

6.1 Outcome

See another booklet.



Capturing the Moment

by

Miyu Kuno

18.2 - 1.3.2013

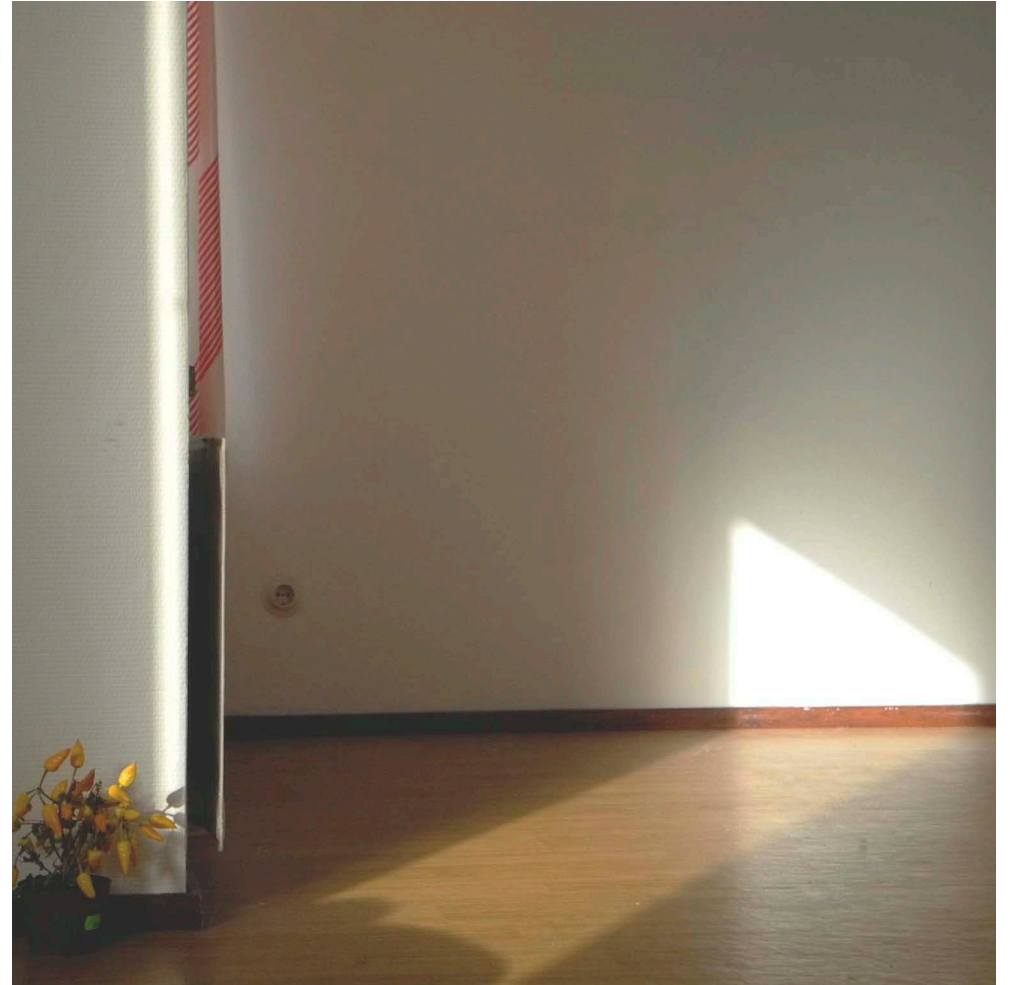
Aralis Gallery, Aalto University Arabia Campus



Photo from experiment



Light and shade in my room



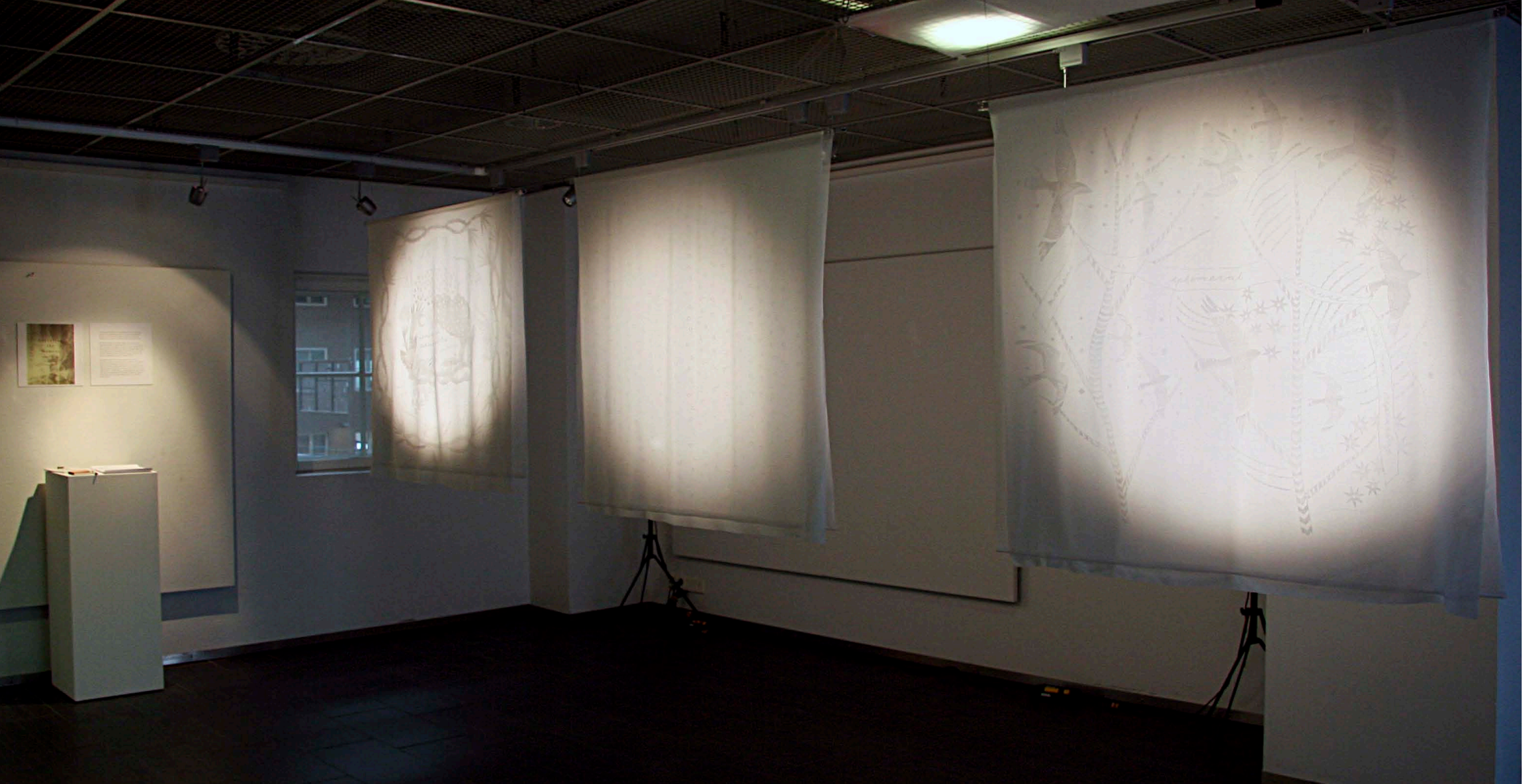
Light and shade in my room



Light and shade in basement



Winter sunlight in Finland, 2012





moment is
ephemeral but
it's repeating





moment

is

ephemeral

circus





Printed fabric (left) and projected shadow (right)



Möbius strip



Scenery from the exhibition



Capturing the Moment

by

Miyu Kuno

Photography by

Foo Aiwei / Miyu Kuno

Published in March 2013

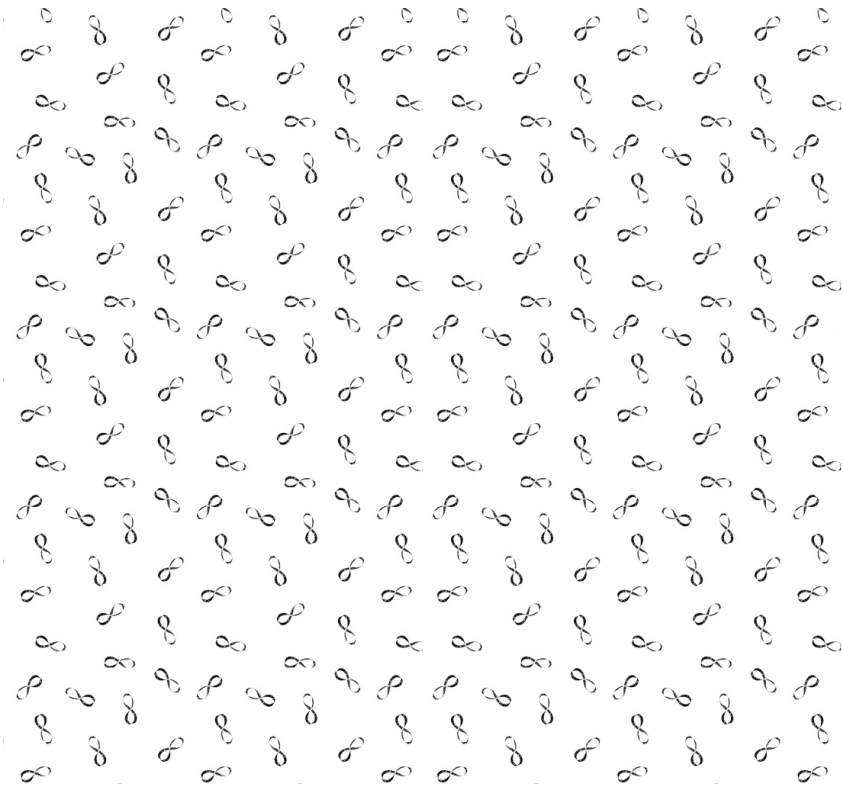
Designed and produced in Finland

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Drawings for Capturing the Moment

6.2 Outline of Capturing the Moment

My work, *"Capturing the Moment"* is an installation artwork. The main idea of this work is to create an artwork, which changes appearances according to the amount of light. In other words, this artwork works as a converter; it converts the light from invisible elements to visible existence. By placing this artwork to a space, the viewer can focus on the passing of time visually.

To say a little bit more about the structural theory: my artwork is made of two layers of fabric, the first layer being a normal plain fabric. Graphical artwork is printed on the surface of the second layer. The graphics can only be seen as shadows of the printed pigments projected on the surface of the plain fabric when a strong light shines from behind the artwork. The top fabric is quite light and thin so it flutters easily. When the fabric moves, the projected shadows also move slightly.

"Capturing the Moment" consists of three pieces of artwork. One with the illustration of tigers expressing the idea of the cyclical view of time and another with the illustration of birds represents the linear view. Short texts, *"Moment is ephemeral because it's not repeating"* *"Moment is ephemeral but it's repeating"* are written on each with some other related motives. Ephemeral is an adjective for

something that lasts for a very short time and meaning is almost the same as the meaning of the word transient.²⁴ I put the texts and illustrations together to pay homage to traditional tapestry (fig.13) and what they represent the viewer is to indicate the meaning of the illustration. The third piece is a small surface-like pattern with the motif from a Möbius strip. (fig.14) This means that the two opposite views of time refer to the same thing and there is no border between them.



fig.13 Tapestry designed by William Morris

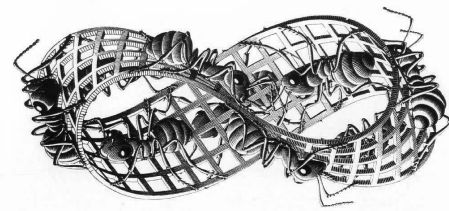


fig.14 Möbius strip by Escher

6.3 Context of My Work

The graphical part of the work deals with quite a philosophical and notional theme but I wanted avoid showing it seriously or too directly because I thought it was better that the artwork had some room for imagination. To leave lightness to the artwork, I arranged motives coming from existing stories as homage and tried to leave the message unclear. The selection of stories for quotation was intuitive and it is not necessary for everyone to recognise the original source of the artwork. The objective of the quotations is to give the viewer room to play with the idea of the artwork by trying to guess what the intention of the artist was.

I think that leaving part of the artwork unclear is important because the creative process is not based on theory only. I also believe that having ambiguous parts in one's own work helps to let the subconscious out from the depths of the mind. For creative people, it is important to know how to control and convert both one's subconscious and conscious thoughts to movement and drive them towards the goal.

6.4 Hidden Stories

“Story is always hidden. The story might not be directly connected to the design. However, that kind of things will be left longer than the things elaborated. We do not know the reason why but we love them.” (Naoto Fulasawa, The Outline of Design)²⁴

When I am planning to draw something, I often get the inspiration for the motives from my past experiences and personal memories. It is my favourite technique and I think it helps to enhance my style. For the thesis work, I also wanted to use the same method. This time, I chose the motives from children’s stories I had read in my childhood.

As a child I really loved reading and still I love reading children’s literature because it is imaginative but contains a realistic message at the same time. Children’s stories are a great source of inspiration for me. The topic I chose, the concept of time, was quite notional and abstract. However I did not want to show its seriousness in my work. The idea to use some motives from children’s stories seemed a good idea because I could hide the core of the message in a dreamy and poetic feeling.

I got the inspiration for the idea of cyclical view of time from the thinking about transmigration. Transmigration is the way of

thinking that all the living beings are repeating the cycle of birth, life death and rebirth.

²⁵ This kind of thinking is typical of Indian philosophy and Eastern thought. This is the reason the tigers are drawn in circles and the illustration of tigers come from a quotation of a famous children’s story, “Little Black Sambo”. This story is world-famous, first published in 1899 in the United Kingdom and still recognised as one of the classics of picture books for children, at least in Japan. The author of the story is a Scottish woman, Helen Bannerman, and originally she wrote the story for her children while staying in India with her husband who worked as a surgeon for the British army. The highlight of this book is the four tigers that took Sambo’s nice garments and started arguing and fighting with each other, by going round and round and they become a mass of butter in the end. The story has remained as one of the impressive memories from my childhood and I remembered this scene when I was thinking about the cyclical view of time and the image of transmigration.

“And the Tigers were very, very angry, but still they would not let go of each other's tails.

And they were so angry, that they ran round the tree, trying to eat each other up, and they ran faster and faster, till they were whirling round so fast that you couldn't see their legs at all.

And they still ran faster and faster and faster, till they all just melted away, and there was nothing left but a great big pool of melted butter (or "ghee," as it is called in India) round the foot of the tree.”

(Helen Bannerman, Little Black Sambo)

So to make a nice pair to this work for the image of linear view of time, I also had some sources of inspiration. Against the composition of drawings for cyclical view of time as symmetrical and stable, drawings for the linear view of time had to be more asymmetric in composition. A tree drawn on the left side does not have any leaves but another one in the right side has leaves and flowers. As the ribbons with text are twisted around both trees, the illustration can be interpreted as expressing one scene from the same space like landscape. However it also possible to expresses the passing of time by drawing some events in the same space on different time axis at the same time if you concentrate on the flowing of the motives from left to right. The image of the birds comes from a story written by a famous Japanese children's literature writer and poet, Kenji Miyazawa. He has several major works such as *"Night on the Galactic Railroad"* and *"Gauche the Cellist"* but the one I used as the motif of my work is *"The Nighthawk Star"* published posthumously in 1934.²⁶

The story begins with the description of the ugliness of the nighthawk. All the fellow birds hate the nighthawk and scorn him as *"a disgrace to all birds"*. He has the word *"hawk"* in his name but, in fact, the nighthawk does not catch small animals but lives by catching winged insects. Even the weakest of the

birds contemns him instead of being afraid of him. Furthermore, the real hawk forces him to change his name to something else, which does not have the word *"hawk"*. The real hawk threatens the nighthawk, if it does not change his name, the real hawk will kill the nighthawk. The nighthawk feels miserable.

He also feels very guilty, because he has to kill a lot of winged insects to survive. So, he decides to become an inhabitant in the open sky. First, he flies towards the sun but he fails because he is not of the life of the daytime world. The sun suggests that he should ask the stars for advice. He tries to ask many different constellations but they do not listen to him. The nighthawk keeps flying. Eventually he is exhausted and starts to fall towards the ground. When the nighthawk becomes conscious, he notices that his body is flaming as the stars in the sky.

In the end of this story, the soul of the nighthawk shifts to a higher dimension when he becomes a star and this event seems an irreversible event. The description of the last moments in the life of the nighthawk is speedy yet lively and dramatic, and also I do not feel the rhythm of repetition in the story anymore. Instead, I imagine an energetic action of life as the escape from the cyclical system of this world controlled by the laws of nature.

*"The nighthawk kept on flying towards the sky without stopping.
The mountain fire below him looked like a cigarette butt.*

*The nighthawk went on flying he went on flying towards the sky,
his breath frozen in the freezing cold and his chest turning white.*

*He had to flap his wings more and more frequently as the air had
become thin. Still the size of the stars did not change even a little.*

*His breathing looked like a bellows. Chilliness and frost pierced
into his body like a sword. His wings turned totally numb.*

*He looked up to the sky once again with his tearful eyes. Yes, and
that was his end."*

(Kenji Miyazawa, The Nighthawk Star)

The third piece of my work does not have any stories as the source but the motive is a Möbius strip. The Möbius strip was discovered by a German astronomer and mathematician, August Ferdinand Möbius in the 19th century.²⁷ A Möbius strip can easily be made when you make normal band with a strip of paper and then you twist it once. The Möbius strip has only one side surface and it is impossible to distinguish the two sides. It also has only one boundary component. So, I use this Möbius strip as motive for the third piece of artwork and try to represent the two opposite views of time; cyclical and linear, referring to the same thing and there is no border between them.

There are two reasons why I did not use the literary motive to all three pieces. The first reason is to make contrast with other two. For that reason, I made a simple repeated pattern in small scale. When the work is seen from a distance, it seems almost nothing at a glance. The viewer cannot recognize the motive as long as he/she sees them in a short distance. The second reason is to make a question arise to the viewer. I thought if I make all the work in the same style, there is a possibility that the viewer thinks I just made different kind of drawings as a variation. To emphasise the existence of hidden messages in the work, the third artwork has quite an important role.

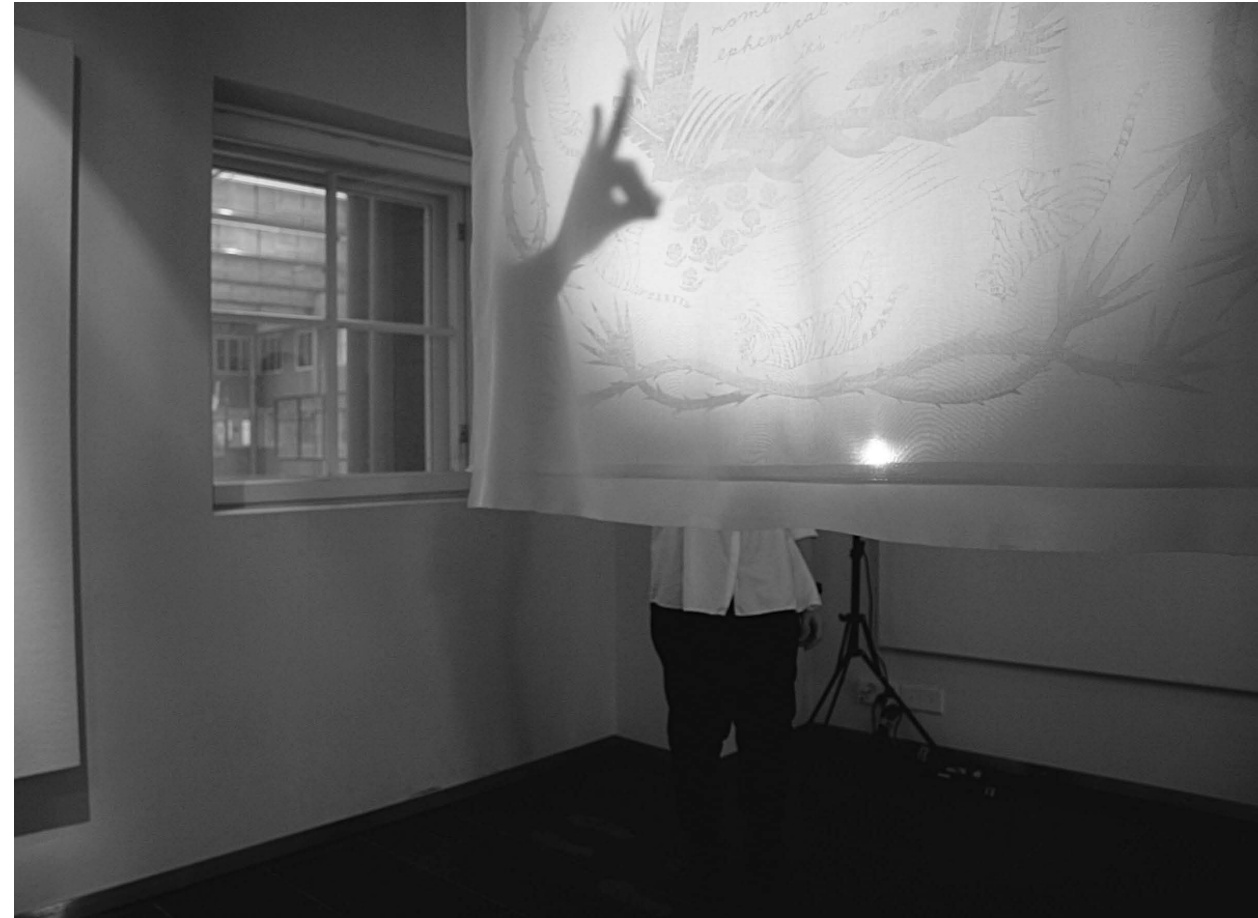
Notes

24 - New Oxford American Dictionary

25 - This phrase is translated by me from Japanese

26 - Super Daijirin Japanese dictionary

27 - Anonymous, 2013. Kenji Miyazawa: Wikipedia [Accessed January 2013]



Picture from thesis exhibition, "Capturing the Moment" 2013

6.5 Process of Idea Development

The idea, which will become the core of my thesis, was clear from the very beginning. The objective of my work is to create an artwork in which the viewer can feel the passing of time. I did not persist to come up with an idea for productive textile design for practical use because I wanted to focus on the communication between me and the viewer, not the user. Then, I thought that an installation is more suitable for my purposes because the artwork comes into existence when the viewer gets my message. Another reason is that surrounding environment (in this case, the amount of the light) can affect the artwork. My idea originally came from the observation of the surroundings and its familiarity for everyone. I thought an installation is a good way to express to others how I see the world. These are the reasons I decided to make an installation.

I had this concept "*Capturing the Moment*" in my mind at a relatively early stage. Before I came up with this concept, some interesting topics and keywords were scattered and floating inside of my brain. So I wrote them down on a piece of paper and tried to find the invisible connection between them. It was not very easy, because I noticed that I often saw interestingness in ideas quite abstract and contradicting in elements. It took a lot of time but finally I managed to gather them

and the concept had come out.

After the concept was decided, I started to think about the ideas for the creative part, which was still unclear in my mind. Initially I had many different ideas but most of them were unrealistic for one reason or another, such as technical problems. However, the physical experimental works and the research for the written part helped me to go forward and I could get a lot of inspiration from there. Both of the parts, research and creative work affect each other and my idea for creative part improved gradually. I got the inspiration to use shadow in my work from the physical work experiment. Also, the research about the history of time provided me with inspiration for selection of motives and composition of my graphical work process.



Picture from experiment with sample, 2012



Picture from experiment, Cotton organdie printed with silver pigments, 2013

6.6 Technical Point of View

Fabric

The most important decision to be made was the choice of the fabric for each layer. For final artwork, I selected the silk for the top fabric and cotton organdie for the second fabric. Woven density for the top fabric must be dense enough to project the shadow on the surface but it also had to have a light feeling. I chose quite a light and thin silk fabric from the sample. On the contrary, the fabric for the second layer must be transparent to a certain extent to have enough contrast with the area filled with printed pigments.

I did not sew or fold the edges of the fabrics when I cut the fabric into actual size of the artwork, because I did not want the shadows

of the edges lose the light feeling of the fabric. I used glue to prevent fraying of the edges of the fabric and cut the fabric as straight as possible.

Pigments

For printing, I chose silver pigments. First, I experimented with white pigments but the white pigments seemed dark in the backlight conditions. Against that, silver pigments reflect the light and do not make contrasts nor distract both under the condition of front light and back light. It helped to bring the fragile and mysterious feeling to the appearance of the work. Also, the silver pigments have larger particles than white pigments and more easily fill the space between the threads. I had to test several different proportions of

silver pigments and printing paste because the silver pigments paste was too thick to print and it needed to be thinned down.

Design

Initially, I had an idea to print the background with pigments but a problem arose. The fabric for the second layer was too loosely woven and the pigments went through the fabric easily. It resulted in that the printed area looked quite uneven when I printed a large area. So I had to change the positive and the negative of the printing area.

There was also the limitation of the size I could print. I had to decide the size of the artwork according to the maximum size of the frame for screen-printing. I took the maximum square size from the largest screen at school. It was one meter times one meter but the size of the final artwork is about 1.2 meter times 1.2 meter because I wanted to have 10 cm margin on every side of the fabric.

Structure

To hang the fabric straight, I needed a bar. It was important that the bar did not affect the impression of whole artwork. My first thought to hang the two fabrics was to use a rectangular bar on both sides of the fabric. So, I prepared rectangular bars in different materials for testing; aluminium and acrylic.

Transparent acrylic bar looked nice but it started bending by its own dead weight when the bar became 1.26 meters long. Aluminium bar was strong enough to hang the fabric straight and also the colour was brighter when compared to other metal bars. The aluminium bar also had an empty space inside, I mean it was like a tube and it was for the exhibition, but I noticed that the space between the top and the second layer was not big enough when I tested it in the gallery space. Then I decided to use six bars in total and to use acrylic bars for top fabric and aluminium bars for the second. When I hung the acrylic bars in 90 degrees rotated direction from the previous, it did not start bending by its own dead weight.

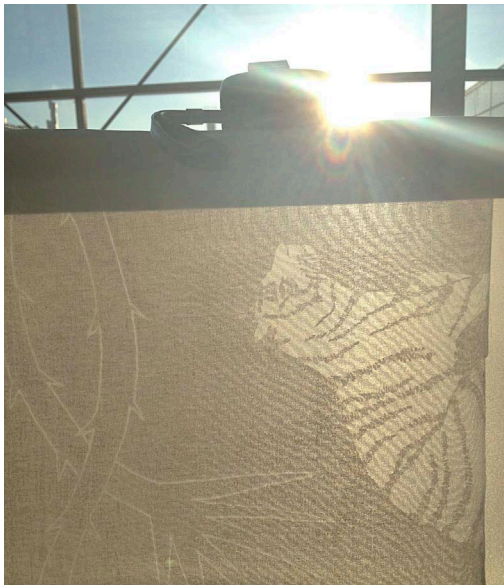
To keep the fabric of the second layer flat and stable, I needed to attach another bar to the lower part of the fabric. Not to affect the appearance, I select the transparent acrylic tube with 1 cm diameter.



Picture from experiment, 2013



Picture from creative process, Printed film for silk screen exposure , 2013



Picture from experiment , 2012



Picture from creative process , 2013

6.7 Planning the Exhibition

Lighting

Lighting was the most important part when I was planning the exhibition. Because the light was an essential element for the artwork and I had to think carefully about what kind of light to use and how to use it. In the early stages of my working process, I planned to exhibit my work in natural sunlight to truly feel the passing of time but I noticed at some point that it did not work so well in the way I meant in the beginning. Instead, I found that the unsteadiness of the projected shadows and the slight movement of the fabrics are interesting enough to feel the existence of invisible things. So, I changed my plan, and decide to use artificial light instead.

I knew by trial that I could get the shadows I wanted with the standard gallery lighting but I was not satisfied with the initial result. I could borrow more powerful lights from school and I also tested it. The result was really good and I could get distinct shadows but there were some problems, too. The lights became really hot even after a short time and I could not leave expensive implements for a long period. So I decided to use the lighting only for the opening and light in gallery for the rest of the exhibition period.

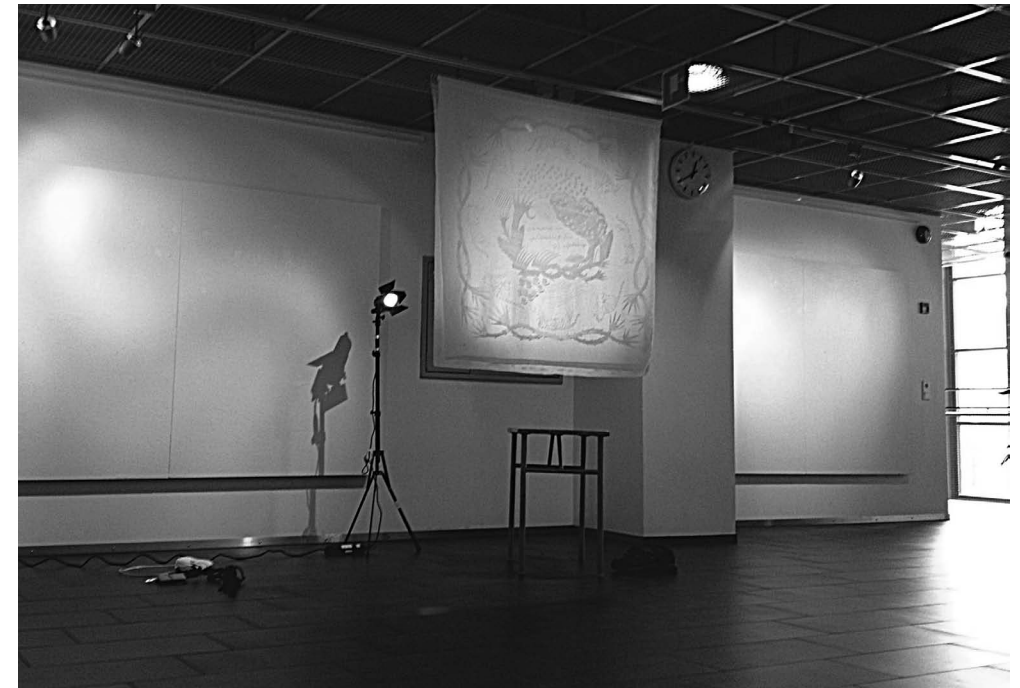
Space

There were several choices of the gallery

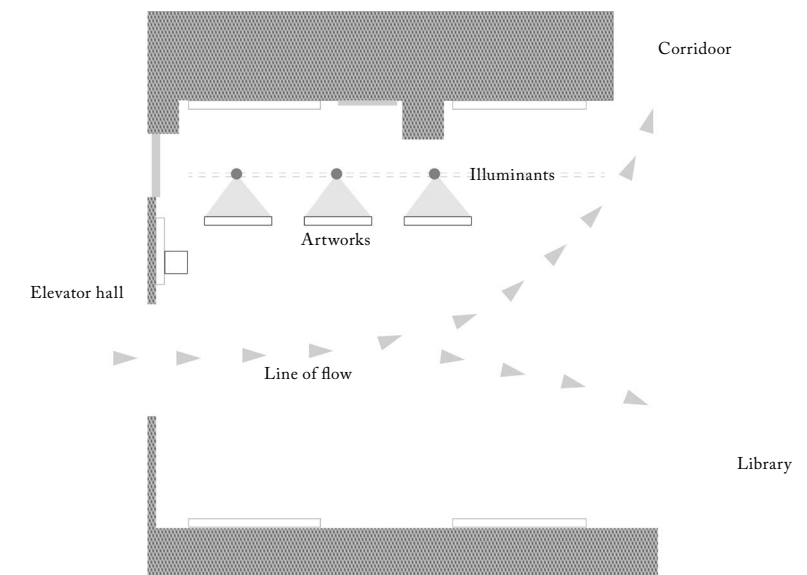
space at university. I considered galleries Lume on the 2nd floor and Araris on the 3rd floor. In the end I reserved Araris on the 3rd floor. The reason I chose this particular gallery is that the ceiling is lower than in Lume and I could have clearer image on how to fix my work in the space. The decision worked out well when I did some testing in the space. It was easy to handle the space. I could easily establish similar circumstances in exhibition trials.

Arrangement

According to the nature of the artwork, my work had to be arranged in a particular manner. The work must be arranged in front of the lighting rail to get the backlight position. I also had to take into consideration the line of flow since the gallery was an open space. I decided the arrangement of the artwork according to the two points mentioned above.



Picture from lighting test at Aralis Gallery , 2013



Floor plan and exhibition plan , 2013



Picture from thesis exhibition, "Capturing the Moment", 2013

6.8 Feedback

Q. Did my work provoke something (thoughts, feelings, questions or whatever) to you?

Can I ask what it was?

To me your work was somehow very touching. It came very close and real, although it was quite dream-like (the light colours, chosen materials, the delicate line etc.) or dreamy. My first impression was that it's airy and maybe even a bit shy. But as I really started looking at the three pieces I found some really strong expression in them, a clear message of some certain moments. And it's nice that you didn't underline anything or make things too obvious. As you had written in the text about the exhibition that it's about you being in Helsinki as an "*outsider*", and seeing things maybe in a different way. I got very inspired by your work and by it being so calm and telling the story in such a simple / ascetic / graceful way. (Vilma)

I remember looking at your textiles, my first thought was summer. It is this feeling what you have in the end of the summer when it's super hot, people are lazy and the grass is almost burned. Then, there is a sudden rain that wipes through the land and it makes the birds fly again and the crickets start to sing their songs. Maybe then it is this specific moment after the rain is over and the sun comes through the clouds again. (Walter)

These lights and shadows of your work and how picture was made through it, reminded me about the way we all see "*reality*" as a reflection of our thoughts. And our mind and thoughts are so unstable and depends on the angle of view. (Varvara)

I was expecting completely something else for the exhibition, the three "*pictures*" with white light were a big, lovely surprise. I had two controversial feelings when I saw your work. One was Finnish Summer feelings with windy, light material. Another was Finnish winter because of the whole white like snow. Also I got misty feeling because you don't show everything in the art piece straight away. There is something mysterious to see through... (Armi)

The work gave me a thought that was, in a way, nonverbal. It was perhaps more like a feeling - something can not be described in words, something really transparent and sublime. And afterwards I suddenly felt going back to the forest in my hometown. (Eri)

The idea about time itself is abstract, philosophical yet there is a sense of archaeological, because it has been a topic for philosophers, or scientists to research on for decades. And so, I think Miyu's artistic approach is from a different dimension and perspective, it is melancholic yet delightful at the same time, seeing from the treatment of the final artworks, the motifs and the final presentation. I think the design is beautiful too, and this series of work would look even better if they are in a different environment, perhaps an outdoor one in the wild, for the theme to coincide with the natural clock of sunrise and sunset. (Aiwei)

7. Conclusion

The core idea of my work consists of quite analogue and simple mechanism; light and shadow. However, I feel simplicity helps my work remain minimal yet strong. On the opening day of the exhibition many people came to see my work and me. I had never talked to some of them before but we could communicate through my work. It was delightful to talk with people and receive comments and observe their reactions to my work. Under the production process, I sometimes felt pained and tortured because the work was much more fragile than I had thought and I could not see the result until the last moment. However, the result was worth the anguish and now I truly appreciate that the exhibition closed safely.

Process of creation is always a sequence of events, which requires momentary decision-making. Take all the events happened by chance and coincidence, the artwork realized itself as a form in reality, like that of my thesis work executed. Unification of all the events in the intended form, when and how to use my brain, have always been significant events for me. Sometimes intuitive decision-making works better than logical decision-making and sometimes the opposite. This time, the process of thesis writing provided me an opportunity to analyse the reasons of my intuitive decision-making. The process of writing described the track of my invisible thoughts and it helped me to understand my habit of unconscious thought. I firmly believe this experience will become a great help in my progress as a creator.

Miyu Kuno



8. Endnote

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(p51) Photography by Foo Aiwei

All the rest of pictures - Photography by Miyu Kuno

Profile

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